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Message Text

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11
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15861

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, VS
SUBJ: THAI/VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATIONS ON FISHING RIGHTS

REF: FBIS D211535Z SEP 74

1. THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE (REF) ISSUED AFTER SOUTH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER VOUNG VAN BAC'S VISIT TO THAILAND FROM SEPTEMBER 19-21, 1974 DOES NOT PROVIDE MUCH INFORMATION ON WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE KEY SUBJECT OF THIS MEETING -- THE THAI/VIETNAM FISHING DISPUTE. PRESS REPORTS AND THE COMMUNIQUE ITSELF ARE SOMEWHAT VAGUE ABOUT WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE TO TAKE PLACE PRIOR TO THE NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER FAC AND THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUN-PHAN ITSARANGKUN NA AYUTTHAYA.

2. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. BUI TIEN RUNG, COUSELLOR OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE EMBASSY, AN EMBASSY OFFICER OBTAINED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BAC/CHARUNPHAN MEETING AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. IN TERMS OF THE FISHING DISPUTE ITSELF, THE THAI AND THE VIETNAMESE WILL EACH DEVELOP SEPARATE WORKING PAPERS BETWEEN NOW AND THE NOVEMBER MEETING. NO WORKING LEVEL CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES IS PLANNED OR EXPECTED
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DURING THIS TIME. THE VIETNAMESE WORKING PAPER WILL

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ADDRESS THE FOUR STEPS IN THE THAI PLAN TO CREATE A COMMON FISHING ZONE IN SOUTH VIETNAM'S CLAIMED WATERS. THESE FOUR STEPS ARE: A) DETERMINE THE AREA OF THE ZONE; B) FIX THE NUMBER OF FISHING TRAWLERS ALLOWED TO FISH IN THE ZONE; C) FIX THE SIZE AND CATEGORIES OF TRAWLERS ALLOWED IN THE ZONE; AND D) DETERMINE THE SPECIES OF FISH THAT ARE TO BE CONSERVED. DR. BUI SAID THAT HE EXPECTS THE THAI PAPER WILL FURTHER DEVELOP THESE FOUR PARTICULAR POINTS.

3. DR. BUI SAID THAT BAC TRIED TO BE FORTHCOMING AND CONFIRMED THAT SOUTH VIETNAM IS READY TO DISCUSS DETAILS. BAC TOLD CHARUNPHAN THAT, "AGREEMENT WILL BE EASY BETWEEN OUR TWO MINISTRIES, BUT MAY BE DIFFICULT WHEN WE BRING OUR PROPOSALS TO OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS." HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION AND PRIVATE INTERESTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES AND FEARED THAT THEY MAY NOT AGREE WITH THE SOLUTION LIKELY TO BE PROPOSED BY THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS. ALSO OF CONCERN TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WAS THAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT REFLECT ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, I.E., IT SHOULD NOT APPEAR AS THOUGH ONE SIDE HAS FORCED THE OTHER TO BACK DOWN. THE RTG WOULD IN EFFECT HAVE TO AGREE TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE RIGHT TO DECLARE A 62 MILE FISHING LIMIT. DR. BUI SAID THAT AT NO TIME DURING THEIR DISCUSSIONS DID RTG OFFICIALS RAISE ANY OBJECTIONS TO ANY OF THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

4. WHEN ASKED WHETHER SOUTH VIETNAM HAD CONSIDERED THE RECENT CAMBODIAN PROPOSAL FOR A 3-WAY MEETING TO DISCUSS FISHING PROBLEMS DR. BUI REPLIED THAT TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL VIETNAMESE REACTION TO THIS PROPOSAL. HE CLAIMS TO KNOW NOTHING MORE ABOUT THIS THAN HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS.

5. BUI STATED THAT ONE OTHER TOPIC OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO CHARUNPHAN WAS THE FUTURE OF ASEAN. CHARUNPHAN "INSISTED STRONGLY" THAT THERE SHOULD BE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A 10-NATION CONFERENCE AMONG ALL SOUTH EAST ASAIN STATES. BAC ASSURED CHARUNPHAN THAT SOUTH VIETNAM FULLY SUPPORTS
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THE THAI PROPOSAL FOR A 10-NATION CONFERENCE AND THE NEED FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION. BOTH MEN AGREED THAT THE PRIMARY STUMBLING BLOCK REMAINS NORTH VIETNAM WHICH HAS STATED IT WANTS NO PART OF ANY SUCH MEETING.
MASTERS

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